

**De Anza College**  
**ARTS4A - Beginning Drawing**  
**Fall 2023**

**CRN: 26329 (Hybrid) - Lab Tue 9:30am-12:15pm A94, Lecture online**

**Instructor:**

**Darren Kerr**

**School Email:**  
**kerrdarren@fhda.edu**

**Alternate email:**  
**dkerr@dkerr.net**

**Instagram:**  
**@TuesdayLifeDrawing**

**Website:**  
**DarrenKerrArt.com**

**Office Hours:**

Mon: 4:45-5:45 A94

Tue: 12:30-1:30 A94

Wed: 11:15-12:15 A4

**Important Dates:**

- First day of class: Tue 9/26/23 9:30am A94
- Last day to add course: 10/7/23
- Last day to drop without W (and receive refund): 10/8/23
- Last day to drop with W: 11/17/23
- Final critique (last class meeting): Tue 12/16/23 9:15-11:15am A94

**Welcome to ARTS4A Beginning Drawing**

This is an introductory course exploring the basic elements and principles of observational drawing using traditional and experimental media.

**Summary**

In this hands-on course, we will experiment with many drawing mediums and techniques for creating monochromatic representational drawings. The lectures, labs, exercises, and assignments are designed to help you to improve how you see our world through the eyes of an artist, while improving your drawing and compositional skills. For art majors, these foundations

will be useful building blocks for future coursework. In any case, drawing and art appreciation enriches your lives, is useful in other fields, and is fun in and of itself.

### **Required Materials**

The class materials packet, which is available in the De Anza Campus Bookstore, includes most of what you will need for the course: various types of charcoal, paper pads, ink pens, erasers, ruler, and a utility knife for sharpening pencils and cutting paper. Additionally, I recommend purchasing two graphite mechanical pencils, a mechanical eraser, and a proportional divider. No textbook is required, but I will occasionally assign readings from web based texts. You will also need a computer to access Canvas and a phone camera to take pictures of references and homework submissions. Detailed materials list below at bottom of Syllabus.

### **Weekly Class Format**

Each weekly module consists of 2.5 hours of Lecture, 2.5 hours of Lab, and approximately 5 hours of homework assignments, which mostly involve drawing.

For this Hybrid version of the class, the Canvas weekly Module contains the Lecture portion of the class. This includes demonstrations, readings, class exercises, and online instructor feedback; students will submit exercises and quizzes online by Sunday midnight to get lecture credit for the prior week's module. *(For in-person classes, students earn Lecture credit by participating and completing exercises in class. Makeups for missed in-person lectures may be allowed if requested within 24 hours of class time.)*

During the in-person **Lab** portion of the class, students apply what they have covered in the Lecture portion, to experiment with new drawing techniques and expand their artistic range. To encourage a bold approach to your artwork, this portion of the course is graded mainly on process (thoughtful effort). All students who attend timely, participate enthusiastically, and put in thoughtful best effort can earn the maximum lab points each week. Your 10 highest lab point totals (out of 12 weeks) will apply to your final grade. Please note that graded projects are to be turned in during lab unless otherwise instructed. Therefore, if you miss a lab, you must make arrangements **ahead of time** to turn in your assignments for full credit; **do NOT skip a lab to work on an assignment** - it would likely result in a lower net grade.

I will also assign ungraded **exercises** every week for completion either in class or at home. The purpose of these exercises is to practice and experiment with techniques and ideas without the stress of worrying about the end result. While they are ungraded, you must still apply effort to complete them in order to get full credit for the weekly lecture or lab points. For Hybrid classes, you should submit them via Canvas by midnight of the Sunday at the end of that weekly module.

There are eight critically graded **Homework Projects** during the course where concepts worked on during Lecture and Lab are applied to creative art projects. Students should spend upwards of five hours per week outside of class on these projects. You will be graded on process, creativity, craftsmanship, and presentation. Each individual project is worth a minimum of 4% of

the total grade of the class, but your best work will count for a higher portion of your total grade through the Midterm and Final Critiques.

**Midterm and Final Critiques.** During the 7th and 12th week modules, you will select your two best homework **Projects** completed over the prior six weeks. You will submit a written description of the works and present in person to me and your classmates, where we will provide constructive feedback. The midterm and final are graded on the quality of your selected artwork, presentation, and also on participation in the critique of other classmate's artwork. The Midterm and Final are each worth 10% of the total class grade. Please note then that your 4 best homework assignments will count for approximately a third of your final grade (4% each when first completed, then additional 5% each during the Midterm and Final critiques). You may rework the projects that you plan to turn in during critiques for a potentially higher grade, assuming that you received some credit for turning in on time when it was originally assigned.

**Class Notebook.** Your class sketchbook/notebook should include notes from lectures, sketches from exercises, ideas for homework assignments, and any other drawings that you find pleasant and useful for the class. It is an area to experiment, jot down notes, and do LOTS of sketching and drawing each week. Portions of the notebook are expected to be messy, but other portions should include thoughtfully presented ideas and drawings. Please date your entries and mark important pages with sticky notes or labelled artist tape. Your notebook will be reviewed by the instructor at midterm and final and will comprise 8% of total class grade.

**Extra Credit.** Students may make up for a full week of Lecture and Lab (4 points) by performing extra credit assignments TBD.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: I don't have much drawing experience - is it possible for me to earn a good grade?**

**A:** Absolutely. My teaching and grading policy is process-oriented. When students put in the expected time and work for this class, they will get a decent grade while (hopefully) having fun and improving their drawing skills and visual arts appreciation. However, sloppy workmanship and lack of improvement during the course of the class will be negatively received.

**Q: I feel I'm already a talented artist, can I skip some classes and assignments and just focus on the midterm/final?**

**A:** No! Like any discipline, how good you are is all relative; if you stop working to improve, your skills will slide backwards. Also, you cannot earn a good grade in this class without completing most of the assignments. Coming into the class with a head start of good drawing skills will certainly make it easier for you to earn good grades on the projects. However, it is no substitute

for putting in honest work. The best in every field generally have some innate talent, but still challenge themselves to always be improving. With that in mind, the lectures, labs, exercises, and assignments all have a healthy weight on your final grade.

**Q: If representational drawing isn't my thing, can I do purely abstract or expressive drawing in this class?**

A: You will have the opportunity to develop your abstract art skills in later courses. However, in this class we will learn and test our knowledge of observational drawing, including proportions, composition, value, and realistic perspective. That said, there is a spectrum to representational art that has abstract or fantastical elements, and I encourage you to incorporate that into your assignments in order to create more original artwork - so long as you also demonstrate mastery of the stated learning objectives of this course.

**Q: Do I need to attend all the lectures and labs?**

A: You will get the most out of this course and more easily achieve your highest possible grade by attending and participating in all of the lectures and labs. Participation in these is fun and easy and over 40% of your final grade in and of themselves. That said, it is understandable that life happens and may cause you to miss a class or two. Please contact me at the earliest possible time if you need to miss (or already missed) a lecture or lab, and I will give you opportunity to make up the points. However, you are still responsible for turning in assignments on time and finding out what you missed in class, so that you do not miss additional assignment points.

**Q: What should I expect in the lectures?**

**A: The lecture portion of the class will usually start with some theory and examples of master artworks that utilize the concepts covered in the current module. This is usually followed by an instructor demonstration, so that students can see various steps and approaches to a drawing. Students are expected to take notes and sketch along in their class notebook. Occasionally I will give a short practice quiz at the end to verify that students have grasped the subject conceptually. Periodically I will ask students to show me their class notes in their Notebook in order to get full participation credit for the lecture. Students can ask questions to clarify concepts during in-person class or in the discussion portion of Canvas.**

**Q: What should I expect in the labs?**

A: During labs, we will experiment with many drawing techniques and subjects. This is also a time to get hands-on instruction and feedback, and to learn through collaboration and critiquing other students' artwork. This is an opportunity to show our work to others. With that in mind, students should get to know and trust each other, as sometimes it seems we are putting ourselves on the line when we show our work to others. However, this is a safe and

constructive environment - we are process oriented, not focusing on results, but on taking risks, experimenting, trying new techniques, and enjoying the act of observing and creating.

Students who attend, perform the lab activities, and have a positive attitude towards themselves and others will always get credit regardless of any subjective opinion of what was created.

**Q: Will I be dropped if I miss too many classes?**

**A:** Enrolled students who miss the first lab may be dropped if they do not contact me with a good reason for missing the class. Students who later “disappear” but do not drop the course will receive an “F”. Do not be that person! It is disrespectful to yourself and to others who were on the waitlist. If you are struggling, please feel free to contact me via message or office hours - I want you to have a great time in class and to succeed. Please see **"How to Drop Classes"** for regulations, dates and procedures.

**Q: What should I know about Canvas?**

**A:** Canvas is where you will find weekly assignments relating to current module, and also where you may submit papers and photos of your drawing assignments. You should log into Canvas at least twice a week to keep up-to-date with assignments and when everything is due. Please do not turn off notifications from Canvas, but rather manage how many you get by going to Settings – Notifications.

**Q: Can I turn in my work late?**

**A:** Assignments, Quizzes and Discussions will close at the deadline on Canvas (some have grace periods), but will not be reopened. Some points from missing a class can be made up in Extra Credit assignments IF you contact me at the time that you miss your class, lab, or exercises. In cases of emergency, email me as soon as possible. It is much easier to be understanding and accommodating *before* a deadline rather than after. The eight graded Projects may not be turned in late to receive credit. You will most efficiently achieve the highest assignment grading by completing and turning in your assignments on time, even if it is not complete nor your best work. You will have the opportunity to rework up to two on-time Projects before the midterm or final to improve your grade.

## **Grading**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Points (out of 100)</b>
Lecture participation and exercises	10 best out of 12 weeks graded on participation, completeness of exercises and notebook	20
Lab participation and exercises	10 best out of 12 weeks graded on participation, completeness, experimentation, and enthusiasm	20
Graded Projects	8 homework Projects graded on completeness and quality - up to 4 points earned per project at time of due date	32
Midterm Critique	Best 2 Projects plus written critique from 1st half of course re-graded	10
Final Critique	Best 2 Projects plus written critique from 2nd half of course re-graded	10
Class notebook	Periodically reviewed	8
Total points possible:		100

## Tentative Weekly Module Topics

Week	Topics
1	Introductions, Syllabus, Grading, Notebook, Charcoal Drawing Materials, Why we draw
2	Spectrum of Representational Drawing, Shapes and Contours, Proportions and Measuring
3	Chiaroscuro - study of light and shadow, methods of shading, methods of lighting an object, value statements
4	Proportions of complex objects, the human figure, methods of measuring and correcting drawings. Using photography.
5	Composition theory and hints, do's and don'ts, composing your own still life
6	Ink drawing Materials, mixed drawing media techniques, more lines, contours, and hatching. Drawing the human head.
7	Midterm Critique of two best homework projects
8	Perspective and creating depth - foreground, mid-ground, and background, interior drawings

<b>9</b>	2-point perspective, exterior and drawings including people and architecture
<b>10</b>	Conceptual drawings from model and/or imagination incorporating composition and perspective
<b>11</b>	Drawing from live model. Developing personal style and vision. Blurring line between representational and abstract.
<b>12</b>	Final Critique of two best projects from second half of course

### **Materials in Kerr Art Kit from De Anza Bookstore:**

- Drawing Paper Pads 400 Series, Medium Surface, 18 x 24, 24 sheets
- XL Newsprint Paper Pads, 18" x 24" - 50 Shts./Pad
- Artist Tote Boards, 23" x 26"
- Sketch Books, Spiral-Bound, 9 x 12 - 80 sheets (160 pages)
- Chamois, 4.5" x 6.5"
- Kneaded Rubber Erasers, QTY2 in kit
- Scotch Low Tack Artist Tape, 3/4" x 10 yd. Dispenser
- Graph Rulers, 2" x 18"
- Mesh Bags, 24 x 32 - White
- Charcoal Drawing Sticks, 6-Stick Set
- Charcoal Pencil Set, 5 Pieces
- Vine & Willow Charcoal, Willow Charcoal Assorted Sizes
- Pigma Micron Pen Sets, Black Ink, 3-Pen Set (01, 03, 05)
- Pigma Brush Pens, Pens, Black QTY2 in kit
- Utility knife

### **Additional Materials to purchase:**

- Two mechanical pencils - I prefer Pentel 0.7mm with small eraser, but get what you want
- Plastic proportional scale divider (available on Amazon for ~\$10)



## **Learning Outcomes and Objectives**

### **Course Objectives**

- Demonstrate the use of freehand drawing skills using a variety of techniques.
- Demonstrate the use of basic elements and principles of composition.
- Apply drawing skills in the interpretation of subject matter using various media.
- Demonstrate ability to draw from an objective point of view as well as from the imagination.
- Demonstrate the creative process.
- Compare and contrast works of art representing a diversity of art traditions and cultures.

### **CSLOs**

- Demonstrate freehand drawing skills using a variety of traditional drawing media such as charcoal, graphite and ink.
- Create representational, objective drawings using references such as drawing from observation (still-life) and photographs.
- Demonstrate the ability to create drawing compositions based on linear perspective, the basic elements and principles of design.